

Get to Know . . .

Denise Jones

Denise Jones, like many of us, did not take a direct path to specialize in government information. She originally wanted to be a school librarian, but an internship at a pharmaceutical company's library set her onto the special libraries track. She eventually took a position as the librarian at a newspaper. "I was the first professional librarian they'd ever had, so I set up a controlled vocabulary and I started online searching for them." Later, she got a job as the research manager at a large newspaper, where she used state documents extensively and developed a solid understanding of state government organization. She moved into her current position as the State Publications Clearinghouse Liaison at the State Library of North Carolina (SLNC) twelve years ago. At SLNC, Denise handles the acquisition of state documents and manages the distribution of documents to the six state documents depository libraries in North Carolina.

With the transition from print to online publications, she has to work a little harder to maintain awareness of new documents. She enjoys reading the many state publications about wildlife, such as *Wildlife in North Carolina*. SLNC holds documents going back to colonial times, and one of Denise's favorite publications is the NC Supreme Court opinions. "There are some really interesting stories," she said, "especially pre-Civil War, and they reflect the way society was." SLNC has a "scan on demand" service, too. "If you find something in our catalog that doesn't have a link to a digital version, you can request to have it digitized," said Denise. After being reviewed, the item will go into the queue to be digitized. "It's a way to find out what people would like us to digitize rather than having to guess."

Collaboration and cooperation are integral aspects of Denise's work. The state Division of Marine Fisheries contacted Denise because it was required to set up an online library of its holdings. She worked with the agency to catalog and host its extensive historical collections. The State Library is also collaborating with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences to host its scientific publications and it is digitizing all of the state statutes from the beginning using grant funding in conjunction with the Legislative Library.

Denise enjoys the variety in her job, where she interacts with academic libraries and state agencies as well as the general

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public. "I have a range of people that I interact with. I do enjoy having those contacts and folks I can call on for help." She devotes a significant amount of time to professional development. Naturally, she is active in the North Carolina Library Association and ALA and she also attends meetings of regional library associations. She added, "I'm a member of the Community College Library Association. They are unsung heroes. They don't have the funding that the big universities have and they are doing a lot with less." She also attends meetings of the GODORT State & Local Documents Interest Group and the State Documents Collaborative Group consisting of librarians who manage state depository systems. Denise especially values the opportunities to network and learn from colleagues in these organizations. She is a big believer in the value of networking. "Whenever I've taught a library school class, I try to impress upon them the importance of joining an organization, but joining is not enough. You've got to get out there and volunteer and participate, and that's when you're going to get benefits," she said. Her advice to a new government information librarian is to ask others for help. "People want to help! You don't have to do it on your own. There is no shame in asking for help."

Outside of the library, Denise enjoys spending time with family and walking her two dogs, and she has high hopes for her garden this year. She is also an avid reader and enjoys historical fiction and nonfiction. A visit to France inspired her to read *The Paris Library*, and she was able to visit the American Library in Paris last spring, where she had the opportunity to view the library's historical scrapbook.

Denise would like to learn more about the technical aspects of digital preservation and artificial intelligence, two fields that are rapidly changing and becoming more important in libraries and archives. "There's always something to learn. I look at something and say, 'I'll never get used to that,' and then I do, and then something else comes along," she laughed.

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